



GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION: COMPLEXITY AND UNCERTAINTY

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ABSTRACT

Economic and technological changes are occurring at an accelerating rate in the information and communication-based society, where learning is an economic necessity. This is particularly the case in the transition period from industrial production to a knowledge and communication-based society. In the current environment it is necessary to provide quality higher education to diverse clients. To provide such service, global higher education institutions encounter numerous complexity issues and uncertainties.

KEY WORDS: global higher education, technology, quality assurance, online learning.

INTRODUCTION:

Global universities today encounter their greatest challenge as they face globalization and economic uncertainty superimposed by emerging technologies (Altbach & Reisberg, 2018). Global higher education institutions are facing decreased funding during a time of scarce resources yet increased accountability for productivity (Brown & Keep, 2018). In recent years nothing has affected global higher education as profoundly as technology. However, technology is only one factor contributing to the complexity and uncertainty facing global higher education (Everhart & Seymour, 2017; Richardson, Garretson, Waller, & Lemoine, 2019).

Evolving Technologies:

Globalization encourages global higher education to meet quality standards demanded in an increasingly technological and diverse society (Wadhwa, 2016). New technologies, especially the Web 2.0, enable learning to be participative. However, a change in perspective and usage of current and evolving technologies seems to be inevitable (Thambusamy, Singh, & Ramly, 2019).

Technologies have accelerated tremendously during the last decade. Changes in development and delivery include, altered instructional methods and expansion of e-learning (Gaullee, Sharma, & Bista, 2020). This combination of technology tools and improved instructional strategies offers significant potential for technology-enhanced learning environments (Marshall, 2018). Because of the ease of global communication, institutions of higher education are able to provide knowledge instantly across huge distances rapidly changing the global higher education landscape (Mense, Lemoine, Garretson, & Richardson, 2018).

The rapid development and application of technology has created a schizophrenic atmosphere for global higher education leaders; integrating technology into an organization that is largely resistant to change (Englund, Olofsson, & Price, 2017). Along with increasing global competition, technology adds complexity and uncertainty to the organizational environment including how an institution manages its virtual presence has become more important than how it manages its campus and physical presence (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016; Gerybadze, 2020). Increasing global interdependencies and the accelerating pace of change demand more flexible, adaptive, and agile global higher education organizations (Dennis, 2018). Technology is transforming global higher education by providing a global focus thereby intensifying the global interconnectedness (Ansell, 2017).

Quality Assurance:

However, all these changes have come at a price: quality assurance. The potential to enter new markets and provide education on a global stage has changed the curriculum development dynamic (Hazelkorn, Coates, & McCormick, 2018). Global higher education must meet new standards of quality that is being demanded by an increasingly technological, diverse global society (Lemoine, Jenkins, & Richardson, 2017). Global higher education has discovered that the old ways do not work, and that innovation is essential (Stensaker, 2018). What has become apparent is not that education is looking to change, but, conversely, technology is pushing fundamental change in global higher education, and education is not willing to make the changes necessary (Davis, 2011; Lemoine, Hackett, & Richardson, 2016). The rise of quality assurance and the increased prominence of data-driven decision making has global higher education leaders

increasingly inundated with data to help ascertain the quality of the institution including its programs and services (Waller, Lemoine, Mense, & Richardson, 2020).

Workforce:

During the next decade, technical innovations will alter the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workplace and society (Qureshi & Nair, 2015). Preparing technically educated and skilled individuals is of great economic importance to all countries and requires significant attention from educators, policymakers and employers. There is an urgent need for these systems to build robust linkages with business and industrial organizations to enhance the quality of the programs being offered, to promote skills development and to make the graduating students employable in a competitive world (Barrett, 2017). Global higher education is experiencing a social and economic transformation that is changing from an industrial focus at a national level, to an information focus at a global level (Bourn, 2018).

Teaching and Learning:

Technology is constantly evolving, and new technologies have profound effects on global higher education. Technology has created vast and rapid changes that have made the utilization of technology essential for global universities (Sarantinos, 2019). With this rapid expansion of network access worldwide, vast arrays of distance learning programs permit educators to reach a more geographically and culturally diverse clientele (Daniela, Strods, & Kalnina, 2019). Technology enhanced learning personalizes learning to assure students master content before moving on to the next activity (Van Nyhuis, 2018). Educators must prepare students to be able to find the information they need and the knowledge of how to analyze appropriately and not just to regurgitate facts (Flavin, 2016).

Online Learning:

Colleges and universities are rushing at an alarming rate to answer the call of the growing number of online learners (Goodman, Melkers, & Pallais, 2019). Increasingly, instructors are depending on technological learning tools to deliver, support and enhance learning. This requires educators to use technology as a learning tool, to assist the learner with the task of learning (Goldin & Katz, 2018). The idea is that learning is not paced so much by the teacher as it is by the student's own capacity to acquire the material.

CONCLUSIONS:

- (1) Increasingly the only sustainable competitive advantage in global higher education is continuous innovation. In other words, the application of new knowledge.
- (2) Educators must use technology to assist in the learning task of students.
- (3) Higher education faces unparalleled and pervasive change.
- (4) Enrollment in online learning is growing at a significantly faster pace than traditional higher education.
- (5) The recent decline in public financial support for higher education is having a significant impact.

- (6) During the next decade, technical innovations will alter the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workplace and society.

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